Trend unemployment rate ends 2019 at 5.1%

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Source: Labour Force, Australia, December 2019

Australia's trend unemployment rate decreased to 5.1 per cent in December 2019, according to the latest information released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

ABS Chief Economist Bruce Hockman said: "In December 2019, the trend unemployment rate decreased slightly to 5.1 per cent, its lowest level since April 2019."

Employment and hours

In December 2019, trend monthly employment increased by around 18,000 people. Both full-time and part-time employment increased by around 9,000 people.

Over the past year, trend employment increased by around 261,000 people (2.1 per cent), which continued to be above the average annual growth over the past 20 years (2.0 per cent).

Full-time employment growth (1.5 per cent) was below the average annual growth over the past 20 years (1.6 per cent) and part-time employment growth (3.2 per cent) was above the average annual growth over the past 20 years (3.0 per cent).

"While there has been stronger growth in part-time employment over the past year, the underemployment rate is still where it was last December, at 8.3 per cent," said Mr Hockman.

The trend monthly hours worked increased by 0.2 per cent in December 2019 and by 1.7 per cent over the past year. This was in line with the 20 year average annual growth of 1.7 per cent.

Underemployment and underutilisation

The trend monthly underemployment rate remained steady at 8.3 per cent in December 2019, unchanged over the past year. The trend monthly underutilisation rate also remained steady at 13.5 per cent in December 2019, an increase of 0.2 percentage points over the past year.

States and territories trend unemployment rate

The monthly trend unemployment rate increased in the Northern Territory, and decreased in Queensland and Tasmania in December 2019. The unemployment rate remained steady in all other states and the Australian Capital Territory.

Over the year, unemployment rates fell in Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory. Unemployment rates increased in all other states and the Northern Territory.

Seasonally adjusted data

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 5.1 per cent in December 2019, while the underemployment rate remained steady at 8.3 per cent. The seasonally adjusted participation rate remained steady at 66.0 per cent, and the number of people employed increased by around 29,000.

The net movement of employed in both trend and seasonally adjusted terms is underpinned by around 300,000 people entering and leaving employment in the month.

More details are in the December 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0). In addition, further information, including regional labour market information, can be found in the upcoming December 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.001) (cat. no. 6291.0.55.001), due for release on 30 January 2020.

These publications are available for free download (after release) from the ABS website: http://www.abs.gov.au (https://www.abs.gov.au) .

Media note

- When reporting ABS data, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (https://www.abs.gov.au) (ABS) must be attributed as the source.
- For media requests and interviews, contact the ABS Media Team on 1300 175 070 or media@abs.gov.au (mailto:media@abs.gov.au) (8.30am - 5pm Monday - Friday AEDT).

- The ABS produces trend estimates to provide a more reliable indicator of the underlying behaviour of the Labour Force series. Trend estimates were introduced into the Labour Force series in the mid 1980s and are available back to February 1978. Trend estimates are considered the best indicators of the underlying behaviour in the labour market. See paragraphs 29 to 38 of the Explanatory Notes (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/exnote/6202.0) in Labour Force, Australia (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0).
- Labour Force Survey data is complemented by other ABS measures to build a comprehensive picture of the labour market.
- Jobs in Australia (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6160.0Main+Features12011-12%20to%202016-17?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6160.0) data provides insights into all jobs held throughout the year.
- Labour Accounts (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6150.0.55.003) (cat. no. 6150.0.55.003) data provides the number of filled jobs at a point-in-time each quarter, while Labour Force, Australia (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) data measures the number of people employed each month.
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